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icists.[31] "Energy is an ideal quantity," says Newcomb.[32] "To gain an idea," Ostwald declares, "of the content of the concept of energy, we will start from the fact that we are able . . . through our will, to call forth occurrences in the external world."[33]

From considerations such as these the idealist refuses the lure of the realist's pretension to the authority of science. For the hypothesized realities of the physical scientists are one and all reducible to the negligible unknown or else to a complex of sensible quality and relation. "Descend, then," says the idealist to the realist, "from hypothesis to fact. Do not talk about vortex-ring, and electron, and ether, and energy, until you have first discussed the terms to which these reduce: the sensible qualities and complexes—extensity, resistance, motion—and the relations—cause, multiplicity, oneness, and the rest. You can give no unchallenged account of these qualities and relations, except as distinctive ways of experiencing, that is, of being conscious."

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DISCUSSION

PROFESSOR DEWEY'S "ACTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS"

In a footnote on page 69 of "Essays Philosophical and Psychological in Honor of William James," Professor Dewey says: "Of course on the theory I am interested in expounding, the so-called action of 'consciousness' means simply the organic releases in the way of behavior which are the conditions of awareness, and which also modify its content." If this is all that Professor Dewey means by the action of consciousness upon the existences which are the direct subject-matter of knowledge, there are several questions that I should like to have answered; for they have been bothering me ever since I have read the very interesting paper on "Reality as Practical."

First. How does such a theory bring about the evaporation of "the metaphysical puzzles regarding 'parallelism,' 'interaction,' 'automatism,' the relation of 'consciousness' to 'body'"? (p. 65, footnote). The organic releases in the way of behavior, we are told, are the conditions of awareness. Although elsewhere in this paper Professor Dewey defines awareness as attention, I presume that in this sentence he would mean to include consciousness in its inattentive forms also under awareness as conditioned by the organic releases. If these releases are the conditions of consciousness, they are thereby distinguished from consciousness; and they are at the same time asserted to be in a certain relation to consciousness: they are its conditions. Now the parallelist, the interactionist, the automatist, and the epiphenomenalist all agree in regarding the brain as in some sense the condition of consciousness. It is hard to see how the questions at issue between these different theorists are made to evaporate "when one ceases isolating the brain into a peculiar physical substrate of mind at large, and treats it simply as one portion of the body as the instrumentality of adaptive behavior,"—unless what is meant be that any question evaporates when it is ignored. It is true that if "the so-called action of consciousness means the organic releases in the way of behavior," there is no question as to the relation of the *action* of consciousness to other physical things. We have here just one physical thing in relation to other physical things. But if consciousness is conditioned by the "action of consciousness" (= organic releases in the way of behavior), there is a question as to the nature of this relation.

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[31] *Cf.* S. Newcomb, in the Baldwin "Dictionary of Philosophy": "Motion is change of place." And *cf.* Hobbes, "Concerning Body," Ch. VIII., XV.

[32] "Dictionary of Philosophy."

[33] "Vorlesungen über Naturphilosophie," p. 153. I am not claiming Ostwald and Newcomb as idealists, but merely pointing out the idealistic implication of their statements.

Second. In what sense can it be said that "a certain promoting, a certain carrying forward of the vital impulse, importing certain differences in things, *is* the aim of knowledge"? (p. 65). Knowledge is one kind of consciousness, presumably. Then, when we are told that the aim of knowledge is the promotion of vital impulse, are we expected to take this as meaning that the aim of the *organic releases* is to promote vital impulse? This is the most natural interpretation; for the aim of consciousness is naturally the aim of the *action* of consciousness. If this be the interpretation that we are expected to put upon this assertion, the instrumental theory of knowledge seems to be an instrumental theory of the brain; and if this be what it is, I suppose that all of us would subscribe to it. But after we have done so, there is still the further question, What is the aim of knowledge *as distinct from* and conditioned by these organic releases? This leads to the third question.

Third. If it is the organic releases that change the environment in the act of knowing, does knowing as distinct from these organic releases make any changes in the environment on its own account? If it does not, how does Professor Dewey's theory on this point differ *in principle* from that of the "program realists"? If it does, what further change does knowing make, and how is he to find out what changes are made? The method he seems to pursue is to set down the difference made by "that organic adaptation involved in all knowing" (p. 69) to the credit of knowing. Why to the credit of *knowing* rather than to the credit of *that organic adaptation,* if these two things are distinct?

Fourth. If the action of consciousness is not the action of *consciousness* but that of the *organic releases* that condition consciousness, why may not things be known as they were *when* they brought about the organic discharges, as well as be known as they become *after* these discharges have in turn reacted upon these things? In other words, once distinguish between consciousness and organic releases, what justification have we for asserting that knowledge can be only of the *effects* of the conditions of knowledge? If knowledge be distinct from its conditions, should we not study it as we study anything else, not confining ourselves entirely to the functions of its conditions, but extending our view to take in any possible functions it may itself have?

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SOCIETIES

NEW YORK BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION[1]

A MEETING was held on February 3 and 4, 1911, in the Psychological Laboratory of Columbia University. On the evening of February 3, a special session in memory of William James was held at the Faculty Club of Columbia University, and expressions of appreciation were given by Professors Miller, Angell, Thorndike, Jastrow, Calkins, and Dewey.

At a business meeting held on February 4, Professor R. S. Woodworth was elected chairman of the Branch, and Dr. H. L. Hollingworth was elected secretary and treasurer. On motion of Professor Dodge, the thanks of the Branch and especially of the visiting members of the Association were conveyed to the members from Columbia University for their hospitality.

The attendance was large, many members of the Association being present from a distance.

An abstract of the scientific proceedings follows.

A Report of Class Experiments on the Relation between Rate of Acquisition and Retention: NAOMI NORSWORTHY.

This experiment was undertaken by 83 students in educational psychology. The material used was a German-English vocabulary

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[1] The tardy appearance of this report is due to the failure of some contributors to the meeting to send abstracts of their papers promptly to the secretary.